

# African Americans in North Carolina

## EDUCATOR NOTEBOOK



## AFRICAN AMERICANS IN NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATOR NOTEBOOK

The purpose of this Educator Notebook is, primarily, to group together articles that were originally published in various issues of *Tar Heel Junior Historian* magazine over many years. The compilation is unique in its breadth of information and insight into the African American experience in North Carolina. As broad as this collection is, however, it is not complete—the stories and experiences of so many people over so many generations in so many settings could never be captured in any number of articles. Still, we have strived to provide a jumping-off place for student exploration and connection.

In addition to *THJH* articles, we have furnished lesson plans and suggested activities that can be used to complement many of the article topics. They are adaptable to different ages and meet curriculum goals set forth by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; in addition, they can connect to classes in national and world history, geography, economics, and the arts and can be part of any unit of social studies.

The African American experience in the land that has become North Carolina began at the same time as the European experience here—over 400 years ago, when African people landed on the shores with European explorers to this New World. In that time, Africans and Europeans had to learn, together, to share land and resources with the native peoples who were already here. Together and separately, African Americans, American Indians, and European Americans formed communities. Over the centuries, African Americans faced the immense struggle of creating and maintaining community in the face of enslavement, war, segregation, and prejudice. They also fought and protested to continue that sense of community, which did endure and grow, and today African Americans across the state share their unique heritage with others.

## A NOTE FOR EDUCATORS ABOUT DISCUSSING ENSLAVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

The subject of enslavement is challenging to discuss. Regardless, it should be and needs to be discussed. Educators who teach North Carolina history work to share the rich and varied lives of all people who have contributed to that history—some of them have names we know and recognize; but many others, whose names and faces and actions have been lost even though they *all* made contributions to our state’s stories, are just as important.

When discussing the institution of slavery, it is important to help students understand not only the horrors of subjugation and the opportunities of the Underground Railroad and the Emancipation Proclamation but also to help them recognize the *courageous, everyday experiences* of enslaved people as they worked to *create and maintain community* and sought to *retain and express their own history and culture*. In addition, we should acknowledge the perseverance of enslaved people to live meaningfully and to oppose enslavement, as best they could, in their day-to-day lives.

When covering this topic, remember, too, that words matter. Calling or labeling a person a “slave,” indicates that the entirety of that person was about slavery, when, in fact, such a person was a multi-dimensional and complete human. “Slavery” was but one part of a person’s life; however, the situation of being enslaved did not define any person as a whole. So, today, preference is for use of the term “enslaved” or “enslavement” to describe that one aspect of a person’s life—not to label him or her in totality.

Self-awareness is another important consideration when discussing the enslavement of individuals. The subject is, and should be, an emotional one, so creating a space where students AND educators are *comfortable* and *supported* is essential to learning about that part of our history. To start that process, educators should take time to do a self-review—to seek out any biases they may have themselves and to acknowledge and diminish them before working with students on this topic.

## DO'S AND DON'TS FOR EDUCATORS DISCUSSING ENSLAVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

The Southern Poverty Law Center's "Teaching Tolerance" project has issued the following list\* to help guide educators when teaching about enslavement:

### **Don't:**

- Use role-plays. They can induce trauma and minimization and are almost certain to provoke parental concerns.
- Focus only on brutality. Horrific things happened to enslaved people, but there are also stories of hope, survival, and resistance.
- Separate children by race.
- Treat kids as modern-day proxies for enslaved people or owners of enslaved people.
- Make race-based assumptions about a child's relationship to enslavement.

### **Do:**

- Use primary sources and oral histories.
- Underscore enslaved people's contributions—roads, towns, buildings, and crops would not have been possible without them.
- Use photographs that reflect activism, family life, and other daily activities.
- Choose texts that illustrate enslaved people as whole individuals. Try *Henry's Freedom Box* by Ellen Levine or *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* by Alan Schroeder.
- Organize field trips to historic sites that reflect enslaved people in a human and courageous light, as well as to places that reflect the lives of black people beyond slavery.
- Introduce stories about black and white abolitionists. Black abolitionists were present, from the beginning, as vocal and courageous advocates for their people.

\*Published in "Tongue-Tied," Teaching Tolerance, Spring 2014, no. 46, and available online at <http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-46-spring-2014/feature/tongue-tied>.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A Chronology of Events in African American Life<sup>1</sup>

#### Blacks in Colonial North Carolina

1. “A Forced Migration,” by Jennifer Farley, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2006.
  - Lesson Plan: “A Forced Migration”: What Do You Know?
  - Lesson Plan: Make and Play Mancala
2. “Arrivals in the East: Settlement of the Coastal Plain, 1650–1775,” by Alan D. Watson, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 1995.
3. “Brothers in Bondage: The Moravians Struggle with the Institution of Slavery,” by Dr. Jon F. Sensbach, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2012.
4. “‘Liberty to Slaves’: The Black Response” by Jeffrey D. Crow, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1992.
  - Lesson Plan: Walk a Mile

#### Antebellum Life

1. “The Two Black Classes of Antebellum North Carolina,” by Sydney Nathans, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1996.
  - Excerpted Narratives of Enslaved People
    - Joseph Baysmore
    - James Curry
    - London Ferebee
    - Moses Grandy
    - Harriet Jacobs
    - John Jacobs
    - Friday Jones
    - Lunsford Lane
    - Allen Parker
    - William Robinson
    - William Henry Singleton
  - Lesson Plan: Discussing Slave Narratives
  - Lesson Plan: Comparing Slave Narratives

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<sup>1</sup>Thanks to the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission for timeline input and review. The timeline is a compilation from multiple sources.

2. “Looking at North Carolina through a Lens of Words” (excerpt), by Dr. Sally Buckner, excerpted from *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2009.
  - Lesson Plan: George Moses Horton and Acrostics
3. “The Slave Community at Somerset Place,” by Dorothy Spruill Redford, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1993.
  - Lesson Plan: Somerset Place, “Women’s Work”
4. “Life on the Plantation at Stagville” by Kimberly Puryear, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2010.
5. “An Adaptable Institution: Slavery in Western North Carolina,” by John Inscoe, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1995.
6. “Phoebe: Spirit of the Past, Light to the Present,” by Mel White, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2009.
7. “A Cabinetmaker’s Apprentice in a Busy Shop,” by Patricia Phillips Marshall, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2010.
  - Lesson Plan: Thomas Day Crafts

## **Prelude to War/Civil War Days**

1. “Panic and Reprisal: Reaction in North Carolina to the Nat Turner Insurrection” by Charles Edward Morris, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Winter 1981.
  - Lesson Plan: Mapping Fear
2. “Quaker Abolitionists: The Largest Slaveholders in the State?” by Mark Andrew Huddle, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1996.
  - Lesson Plan: “What Does This Mean” and “What Will I Do”
3. “A Wagon with a Story to Tell”, by Rebecca Graham Lasley, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2008.
  - Lesson Plan: “What Does This Mean?” and “What Will I Do?”
4. “African Americans in Union-Occupied Eastern North Carolina during the Civil War,” by RaeLana Poteat, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2000.
  - Lesson Plan: Eastern North Carolina, Civil War Days
5. “United States Colored Troops: Fighting for Freedom,” by John H. Haley, PhD, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2011.

## Emancipation

1. “First Steps to Freedom: North Carolina’s emancipation experience,” by John David Smith, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1995.
  - Lesson Plan: First Steps To Freedom
2. “African American Political Pioneers,” *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, by Earl Ijames, Fall 2008.
  - Lesson Plan: Picture This: African American Political Pioneers
3. “Uncovering a Person’s Story: Edward R. ‘Ned’ Rawls,” by Earl Ijames and Michelle Lanier, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2009.
4. “George Henry White,” by John Haley, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2000.
5. “School for Freed People,” by Alex Sandifer and Berry Dishong Renfer, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1997.
  - Lesson Plan: Letters about Learning

## Jim Crow Days

1. “Assigned Places,” by Flora Hatley Wadelington, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2004.
  - Lesson Plan: Understanding Jim Crow, the Character
  - Lesson Plan: Voting Under Jim Crow
2. “What One Young African American Woman Could Do: The Story of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the Palmer Memorial Institute,” by Charles W. Wadelington, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1995.
  - Lesson Plan: Charlotte Hawkins Brown—School Rules, Then and Now
3. “Wilmington Race Riot,” by LeRae Umfleet. *NCPedia*, posted September 17, 2010.
  - Lesson Plan: What Do You Know? Wilmington Race Riot
4. “Middle-Class Durham during the Age of Jim Crow,” by Beverly W. Jones, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1995.
  - Lesson Plan: Durham: A Thriving Community
5. “The Great Migration and North Carolina,” by Dr. Shepherd W. McKinley and Cynthia Risser McKinley, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2006.

6. “Challenging the Chain Stores,” by Dr. Lisa Tolbert, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2007.
7. “Work and Opportunity: African Americans in the CCC,” by Dr. Olen Cole Jr., *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2010.

## **The Civil Rights Movement and Beyond**

1. “African American Civil Rights in North Carolina,” by Dr. Flora Bryant Brown, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2004.
  - Lesson Plan: Connecting to the Civil Rights Movement
  - Lesson Plan: Where in Time: North Carolina Civil Rights Timeline
2. “With Deliberate Speed: North Carolina and School Desegregation,” by Jefferson Currie II, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2005.
  - Lesson Plan: School Desegregation—What Happened Here?
3. “Love May Lead to Freedom, but It Usually Takes a Few Steps: The Story of the 1960 Greensboro Sit-Ins,” by Dr. Millicent Ellison Brown, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2004.
  - Lesson Plan: Who Were the Leaders?
4. “Personal Reflections: Lest I Forget the Civil Rights Movement, the Ligon Jubilee Singers, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,” by Ann Hunt Smith, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2004.
  - Lesson Plan: Who Were the Leaders?
5. “Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee,” by Diana Bell-Kite, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2013.
  - Lesson Plan: Who Were the Leaders?
6. “The Fighting Women of Bennett College,” by Dr. Linda Beatrice Brown, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2014.
  - Lesson Plan: Who Were the Leaders?

## **North Carolina African Americans Culture, American Culture**

1. “African American Culture and the World Around You,” North Carolina Museum of History for News in Education, *The News and Observer*, January 28, 2009.
2. “Discovering the Past through Cultural Traditions,” by Alice Eley Jones, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1995.
  - Lesson Plan: African American Cultural Traditions

3. "African Influences on North Carolina's Agriculture," by Peter H. Wood, (excerpts) *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1998.
  - Lesson Plan: Where Did This Food Come From?
4. "European Farmers in a New World," by Wayne Rudolph, (excerpts) *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1998.
  - Lesson Plan: Where Did This Food Come From?
5. "They Were First to Use This Land: Native American Influences on North Carolina Agriculture," by Stephen P. Evans, (excerpts) *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1998.
  - Lesson Plan: Where Did This Food Come From?
6. "Views through Pen and Ink: North Carolina's Antebellum Literature Records an Era," by W. Keats Sparrow, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1996.
7. "A Descendant Reflects on the Roanoke Island Freedmen's Colony," by Michelle Lanier, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2011.
8. "Early Black Baseball in North Carolina," by Bijan C. Bayne, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2011.
9. "The African American State Fair," by Jim Sumner, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2002.
10. "America's Music in the 1920s," by Barrett A. Silverstein, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2004.
  - Lesson Plan: Paint Stirrer Banjo
11. "African and African American Storytelling," by Madafo Lloyd Wilson, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2002.
12. "African American Brilliance," by Patricia Carter Sluby, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2006.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
13. "Vernon Haywood: Tuskegee Airman," North Carolina Museum of History for News in Education, *Raleigh News and Observer*, November 7, 2003.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History



14. "Touching Base with a Tuskegee Airman," by Doris McLean Bates, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2003.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
15. "College Basketball Pioneers in North Carolina," by Jim Sumner, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2011.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
16. "Shooting Past the Color Line," *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2011.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
  - Lesson Plan: Basketball and Cup Craft
17. "'The Great Agitator': Golden A. Finks," by Shirl Spicer, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2004.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
18. "Wheeler Airlines: An American First," by Charles W. Wadlington, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2003.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
19. "Henry Frye, Chief Justice: An interview," *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2000.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
20. "On My Way: One Actor's Creative Journey," by Mike Wiley, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2009.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
21. "On Common Ground: The Vision of the Reverend Grover Cleveland Hawley," by Lynda D. Edwards, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2014.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
22. "Selma Burke: A Trailblazing Sculptor," by Dr. Alison Fleming, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Spring 2014.
  - Lesson Plan: Individuals Make History
23. "African American Memory on the Landscape," by Catherine W. Bishir, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2014.
24. "Defining Places of African American Memory," by Catherine W. Bishir, *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 2014.

## **Resources**

1. Image Index